

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 059003

EXDIS, MILITARY ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PGOV, KS, US

SUBJECT: ROK FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE
SECRETARY -- BILATERAL ISSUES
CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD
SUMMARY. THE DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL ISSUES FOCUSED ON
PROSPECTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE
MEASURES AND THE CONTINUING CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS
OF ALLEGED PAST INFLUENCE BUYING. THE SECRETARY REAFFIRMED
THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO MUTUAL DEFENSE OF KOREA AND REPORTED
CONTINUING ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO SECURE FULL CON-
GRESSIONAL SUPPORT OF PENDING EQUIPMENT TRANSFER AND FMS
PROPOSALS. HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT WE WOULD GET AT
LEAST PARTIAL APPROVAL THIS YEAR. REGARDING THE INVESTI-
GATIONS, THE SECRETARY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE
SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ARRANGEMENTS FOR TONGSUN PARK TO
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TESTIFY, BUT CONCLUDED THAT THE ETHICS COMMITTEES WOULD
CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR ACCESS TO FORMER ROK AMBASSADOR
KIM TONG-JO. END SUMMARY

1. SOUTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER PAK TONG-JIN CALLED ON
THE SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON MARCH 6, ACCOMPANIED BY
AMBASSADOR KIM YONG-SIK, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FONMIN

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BUREAU CHONG U-YONG, DEPUTY
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FONMIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS BUREAU

YU CHONG-HA, AND EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR PAK KUN-U.

2. IN ADDITION TO THE SECRETARY, UNDER SECRETARY HABIB,
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY (EA), KOREA COUNTRY
DIRECTOR RICH, AND MICHAEL ARMACOST (NSC) WERE PRESENT.
THIS IS THE FIRST OF TWO MESSAGES REPORTING ON THE
MEETING.

BILATERAL ISSUES

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER RECALLED THAT THE LAST MEETING
WITH THE SECRETARY HAD LAID THE BASIS FOR A TONGSUN PARK
SOLUTION. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THIS WOULD HELP ALL
CONCERNED TO REACH AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF OUTSTANDING
PROBLEMS. FONMIN PARK AFFIRMED THE GREAT CONCERN OF THE
ROK FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S. AND
HOPED THIS CASE WOULD NOT LASTINGLY INTERFERE. THE
SECRETARY EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION THAT MATTERS HAD WORKED
OUT REGARDING TONGSUN PARK AND CONVEYED THE APPRECIATION
OF JUSTICE OFFICIALS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION WHICH
HAD BEEN EXTENDED TO THEM IN SEOUL.

4. PARK EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S
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FIRM STANCE REGARDING CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR TESTIMONY
BY FORMER AMBASSADOR KIM TONG-JO. IN RESPONSE TO PARK'S
REQUEST FOR THE SECRETARY'S ASSESSMENT, THE SECRETARY
CONCLUDED THAT THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEES WOULD
CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR SUITABLE ACCESS TO KIM.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE MILITARY COMPENSATION AND ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS LINKED WITH THE U.S. GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL
PLANS, THE SECRETARY REPORTED THAT HE AND SECRETARY BROWN
HAD TESTIFIED AT LENGTH AND HAD TAKEN EVERY SUITABLE
OCCASION ON THE HILL TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE
MEASURES AND THEIR CONVICTION THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE
LINKED WITH INVESTIGATION OF PAST PROBLEMS.

6. THE SECRETARY ASSURED PARK THAT THE USG STANDS FIRMLY
BEHIND OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE ROK AND
ATTACHES FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE TO IT. NORTH KOREA WOULD
MAKE A GRAVE MISTAKE TO DOUBT THIS COMMITMENT.

7. NOTING THAT IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE
JUDGMENT ON CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, THE SECRETARY STATED
THAT WE BELIEVE THE CONGRESS WILL APPROVE AT LEAST A PART

OF OUR REQUEST THIS YEAR. MEANWHILE, THE ADMINISTRATION STANDS FIRMLY BEHIND OUR REQUEST FOR THE FULL PACKAGE AND

WE HAVE NOT MADE ANY JUDGMENT AT THIS TIME THAT THIS WILL NOT BE FEASIBLE. OUR PLANS ARE STILL ON SCHEDULE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FIRST BRIGADE OF U.S. FORCES LATE THIS YEAR.

8. NOTE: SUBSEQUENT TO THE MEETING, AMERICAN AFFAIRS DEPUTY DIRECTOR YU CONTACTED KOREA COUNTRY DIRECTOR RICH TO SEEK CLARIFICATION OF THE ABOVE POINT, SINCE THIS HAD BEEN THE FIRST COMMENT INDICATING THE POSSIBILITY OF A "PARTIAL" APPROVAL BY THE CONGRESS. IN RESPONSE TO YU'S QUESTIONS, RICH EXPLAINED THAT THE PARTIAL
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APPROVAL REFERRED TO THE EQUIPMENT TRANSFER AUTHORITY, WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION WAS SEEKING AS A TOTALITY. HE TOLD YU THAT: 1) WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT SOME CONGRESSMEN ARE CONSIDERING INTRODUCING A BILL AUTHORIZING TRANSFER ONLY OF THAT EQUIPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR, THUS POSTPONING UNTIL NEXT YEAR THE MAJOR DEBATE ON THE ENTIRE WITHDRAWAL PLAN AND COMPENSATION PACKAGE; 2) THIS IS NOT AN ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL; 3) IT HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY INTRODUCED BY ANYONE; 4) AND TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE IDEA DOES NOT AFFECT THE FMS REQUEST, BUT IS RELATED SPECIFICALLY TO THE TRANSFER AUTHORITY. YU WAS CAUTIONED REGARDING ANY DISCUSSION OF THIS ALTERNATIVE, SINCE TO DO SO COULD UNDERCUT CLEAR ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO WIN APPROVAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS AS NOW BEFORE THE CONGRESS. KNOWLEDGE THAT SOME CONGRESSMEN ARE CONSIDERING SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE, HOWEVER, GIVES US SOME HOPE THAT, IF POLITICAL FACTORS PREVENT FULL CONGRESSIONAL ACTION THIS YEAR, THERE MAY STILL BE ROOM FOR A RESPONSIBLE ACTION BY THE HILL WHICH WOULD BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE FIRST PHASE OF WITHDRAWAL. VANCE

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